

Demon of the Fleeting Cherry Blossom

by MidnightShadow0110

Category: HakuÅ•ki/è-„æ;æé¬¼, Naruto

Genre: Adventure, Romance

Language: English

Characters: Kazama C., Okita S., Sakura H., Sanosuke H.

Status: In-Progress

Published: 2014-03-27 23:30:47

Updated: 2016-01-16 09:13:27

Packaged: 2016-04-26 20:48:39

Rating: M

Chapters: 4

Words: 22,481

Publisher: www.fanfiction.net

Summary: Sakura is forced to leave her home in order to survive. She finds shelter amongst a group of men known as the Roshigumi. Sadness and self loathing are all Sakrua has ever known, now the walls she has built up for years are being torn down by these men. The possiblity of living a happy life seems like a dream to Sakura, but all dreams are capable of turning into a nightmares.

## 1. A Sheep in Wolves Clothing

\*\*I know two new stories in one day what the hell have I been doing.\*\*

\*\*But I've been wirting these stories along with updating my other stories and this story and my last have had 2 or more chapters finished just sitting around for a while now so I really wanted to post them and see what you guys think.\*\*

\*\*If you have ever watched Hakouki (demon of the fleeting blossom or any of the other seasons) then you will have a better feel for some of the characters.\*\*

\*\*If no I have done a pretty good job at depicting the characters in this chapter.\*\*

\*\*But I came up with this story because I love Hakouki and all its yumy reverse harm goodness and all the action, blood and demons! How could I not wirte a cross over for it, expeically since there arent that many out there.\*\*

\*\*Well I will stop rambling so we can get started,\*\*

\*\*Here it is the first chapter of, Demon of the Fleeting Cherry Blossom\*\*

\* \* \*

><p>A cloaked figure stumbled through the almost deserted streets of Kyoto, the figure beneath the cloak was a woman, not that anyone could tell. The cloak covered any features that would give her away as a female, and her hood was up so that no one could see her face. No one would believe a woman would walk around the streets alone at night so to everyone she looked like a drunken man heading home. This was in fact far from the truth, the woman had been traveling for a week, the last three days she had not slept in fear of being caught and had barley had anything to eat or drink because of her lack of previsions. On Her back was a small pack that held everything she owned, it was not much just the necessities, that's all she was able to get away with.</p>

\_ "Kondou... I have to find Kondou-san..."\_ The woman thought as she stumbled once more. She had been told that Kondou had moved from his Doujo in Edou to come to the captial in Kyoto by a kind elder woman. She had just arrived in Kyoto today and had been wondering around the town since then. She had yet to find any clues as to where to man might be, although even if she had found something, it was possible she was too exhausted to even know what she had found. The woman lifted her head to see where she had wondered too, it looked like a compound of some wort but her vision was starting to blur. She bowed her head back down unable hold it up any longer. She had no clue where her feet were carrying her until she bumped into something hard.

"Hey watch where your going!" a masculine voice boomed from in front of the woman, she stiffened she was not equipped to deal with any men, she was too weak at the moment. She stumbled once again backing away from the man she had bumped into and looked up only to notice there were three men standing in front of her. Two of them were extremely taller than her and looked to be a few years older than herself, while the third was shorter but still quite taller than her and looked a few years younger. She stiffened once again, this was bad she needed to apologize. "I'm...I'm sorry..." She breathed out, finding it to be a daunting task to hold herself up any longer.

She bowed low to the three men hoping that they would let her go but the next thing she heard made her regret talking at all. "Hold on what is a woman doing out at night, alone?" She looked up to see it was the taller of the three men that had spoke, he had long auburn colored hair pulled back in a low pony tail and sharp golden eye. But what caught her off guard was the gentleness in his eyes, there was no sign that told her he meant to harm to her in any way. She didn't know what to do but her body wasn't going to allow her to run so she stood there, debating on if she should tell them what she was doing. Maybe they knew Kondou, she really didn't have much luck just searching the town.

"I am... Looking for a man... named Kondou... Isami Kondou..." she whispered, she felt her strength leaving her, with no food or clean water for days it was really starting to take a toll on her. She looked up at the men and noticed that she could no longer make out what their faces looked like. she could tell she wasn't going to be able to stay conscious for much longer. Her legs started to shake under the pressure of her body weight. "What is it you want with Kondou?" The second tallest man asked but it sounded like a far off echo to the woman. She started to sway back and forth trying to stay on her feet, but as the inevitable came crashing down on her she

started to fall to the ground.

She waited for her face to hit the ground but found that she seemed to stop mid fall. She looked up to see soft golden eyes, and that was the last thing she saw before she blacked out

\* \* \*

><p>The woman felt the light touch of the sun's rays shining in on her face, she grumbled slightly not wanting to wake up. She tried to turn to face the opposite way of the sun but found that she couldn't move. This brought a wave of panic over her body and her eyes instantly opened, ignoring the violent rays of the sun as they shined in her eyes. She tried to sit up but found the task to be too difficult for her recovering body and just opted to look down at her hands and legs. The panic in her increased when she saw that her hands and feet were tied and not only that but her sword was no longer at her side. She tried to take a deep breath to calm herself down, she had to get out of where ever she was.</p>

She looked around the room, it looked like a traditional style room, with sliding paper doors and wooden floors. The room wasn't that big, just big enough to fit the tatami mat she was laying on and maybe a few other things.\_ 'Calm down... if they were going to kill me they would have done so already...' The woman thought to herself, logic finally filling her brain. But her moment of calmness was short lived as she remembered something important. Her bonds hands quickly went up to her head, she let out a sigh of relief when she noticed her hood was still up and covering her head. '\_That was close...'\_ she thought to herself once again. She started to try and assess the situation when she heard footsteps coming her way.

Her body froze, she didn't know what to do, she was at the mercy of whoever it was that had brought her to this place. Her mind was racing a mile a minute when the sliding door to her room opened to reveal a man. She looked up at the man that had entered her room, he was tall, and had shoulder length black hair, and round circle shaped glasses. She flinched as he approached her, a knife in his hand, she closed her eyes thinking he would take a stab at her. But when she felt no such pain she opened her eyes to see he was cutting the rope that bound her hands and feet. Once she was free The woman slowly sat up, rubbing her sore wrists.

"Come with me please." The man said his voice was soft and gentle but the woman hesitated for a moment, this was one of the men that had tied her up, she had no clue what he was going to do with her. She nodded none the less, knowing there was nothing else she could do and followed the tall man as he lead her through what looked like a large compound. It didn't take long before he lead her to a large room that was filled with 7 men, making her halt in her steps. She didn't like this, she was out numbered and all the men in the room seemed quite skilled by the look of their body types. On top of this she was still weak, from not having any food or water. She stood there staring at the men before a man that sat at the end of the room spoke, "Sit my dear." His voice was gentle and soft and his eyes looked sincere but she still did not feel comfortable around so many men. The men were lined up on either side of the room, four on one side and three on the other making an aisle in the middle. The man who had brought her here gestured for her to sit in the middle of the aisle before walking to the end of the aisle and sitting down himself. The woman remained

standing, unable to shake the uneasiness she felt in the room. "What is your name child?" the man who had spoken before said grabbing the woman's attention.

"My name... Is Sakura... Sakura Haruno..." She said not looking at anyone in the room.

"My name is Kondou, Harada here tells me you have been looking for me." The man said making Sakura look up at the man who had spoken, he had short black hair just long enough to pull half of it back and he had black charcoal eyes. Sakura straightened up, this is who she had been sent to find! She then looked toward the man that Kondou had spoken of and noticed it was one of the men she had bumped into the night before. Sakura turned to Kondou simply nodding her head before sitting down, she had to stop herself from shaking from her nerves. She did not have good experience with people and especially not so many people in one place. Kondou sighed it was normal for a woman to feel unsafe in an unfamiliar environment with so many men but he felt it was necessary. "Would you mind removing your hood Sakura" Kondou asked making Sakura stiffen.

His face had been gentle but all Sakura felt while staring at him was panic, her hands raised to her hood and pulled it tighter to her head. "I feel you will not listen once I remove this hood." Sakura's voice was soft and seemed to shake slightly but her body remained still. The men in the room gave her a questioning look as she continued to hold the hood tightly to her head. "I will not speak with someone who will not show me their face." Kondou said not backing down from his request, if he could not see her face then he could not take anything she said to face value, literally. Sakura took a deep breath she could tell that he wasn't going to back down from this and she understood she would not trust herself either. But this was a sensitive situation.

Taking another deep breath Sakura gripped the edges of her hood so tightly her knuckles turned white. Slowly she pulled the hood aside, long pink locks of hair fell over her shoulders and down to the floor. Her pale skin had splotches of dirt on it, dark lashes framed jade colored eyes. The men in the room gasped but it was not due to the gentle beauty her face held, it was due to the pink fox ears that lay on top of her head. Finding no need for the cloak any longer, Sakura discarded it and lay it on the floor next to her. The men in the room gasped again when they saw a pink tail with a white tip poking out of a hole in her old worn looking yakata. Sakura's ears folded down so that they lay flat on her head and her tail pulled closer to her. She knew this would happen, once they saw what she looked like, now she knew they would kick her out and want nothing to do with her if they were nice that is. She didn't know why she had fooled herself into thinking that they would never find out. "I will just leave..." Sakura whispered her voice shaking as she started to stand up but stopped once Kondou spoke, "Mrs. Haruno, you came here to speak with me, you very well can't do that if you leave." Kondou said the look on his face was gentle but still held shock. The only thing Sakura could think of was, this man must be a kind soul to not just throw her out right then and there. She fell back onto her knees and bowed her head so far down that it touched the floor and even then it looked as if she wanted to bow further. "Thank you..." Sakura whispered, looking up at Kondou she could almost see the man she thought of as a father in him. That brought a sharp pain to her chest still remembering the night she had fled.

There was a long pause of silence but Sakrua could feel the looks of the other men on her, she looked toward Kondou once more. "I am as you can see, a demon..." Sakura started off, she thought it was best to explain her appearance but thought different when the room filled with noise once more. "That is impossible, demons do not exist." The dark haired man that in the front to the right of Kondou said looking at Sakura with disbelief. Sakura's ears matted to her head once more as she looked down at the ground. "Yet here I am before you... Your eyes do not deceive you..." '\_But I wish they did...' Sakura continued to herself, she hated what she was, her ears and tail had done nothing but bring her pain and suffering and she wished she could be ride of them.\_

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The men in the room seemed to have nothing else to say against her claim of being a demon, although they all seemed weary of her still. "I was sent here by Akio Etsu." She began once more skipping right to the point, she noticed the Kondou seemed surprised by her statement. Akio had told her that Kondou was an old friend of his back when he had studied at the mans dojou but they had not been in contact for a long while. "About a week ago the villagers in the town we lived in banned together and raided Akio's doujo in an attempt to get ride of me..." Sakura paused remembering the even like she had just left today, she had to push back the tears that threatened to gather in her eyes. Kondou was giving the girl his full attention but he couldn't help the words from falling from his mouth next. "Is Akio alright?" Kondou asked seeming truly concerned. Some of the other men in the room also seemed concerned most of them had trained with Akio when they were younger.

Sakura tried to stop from trembling as she reached into her Yakata and pulling out a letter and handed it to Kondou, he noticed her hands were trembling as she passed on the letter. The man slowly opened it and began to read its contents.

\_My dear Friend Kondou,\_

\_If you are reading this then that means I am most likely dead. I have sent a young girl named Sakrua to you for your help. I can only imagine the look on your face when you see her ears and tail, old friend. Yes, this girl is a demon but make no mistake Kondou she is no threat to you unless you make her your enemy.\_

\_I know this is asking a lot of you my friend, but as it is my dying wish I hope you see it through. This young girl has endured so much hardship in her life, she had been on her own for 9 years since her mother was killed by villagers a few villages over. She collapsed in front of my Doujo when she was 13, starved and beaten, I thought of turning her away but when she woke she jumped to her knees and bowed before me apologizing like she had done something terribly wrong. Kondou You know I'm not a strong enough man to turn away a helpless child no matter what they are.\_

\_And so I took Sakura in and raised her, I learned early on that she possessed tremendous healing abilities. Like you will be I was astonished by these abilities. I have taught her rigorously in the sword arts, and I must say she has tremendous talent. As you know I do not give out compliments kindly so I know this girl will not be a hindrance to you in any way, on the contrary she will help you in

many ways.

><em>

\_I know it is a lot for me to ask of you to take in a demon, even with her talents, but I beg of you my friend to take care of her. She has had nothing but misfortune in her life, the villagers here have wanted her dead for years and I can't imagine it was any different before she came here. She truly has a pure heart Kondou, you will never meet anyone more loyal and trustworthy in your ranks. If you give her just an inch she will give you miles and miles and still keep going.\_

\_I wanted nothing more in my life than to give such a kind soul a good life and I failed. Please my friend, I'm asking you to give her the life I couldn't, give her some happiness, she deserves it. You wont regret it, she will be loyal to you and the other men till the end, I swear it on my own grave.\_

\_Last regards ,\_

\_Akio Etsu.\_

"Akio is dead..." Kondou said quietly grabbing the attention of all the men in the room, the man with dark hair next to Kondou grabbed the letter and began to read it himself not believing what he had heard.

"Akio told me to flea... I resisted his demand but he told me to go or he would commit sepaku if I didn't... He said to find Kondou-san, and that he would help me... ..." Sakura finished trembling visibly, her voice cracking, she sounded like she was trying to give reason to why she had left. She felt tears gather in her eyes so she bowed her head and she tried to keep them at bay. She would not cry in front of these strangers, she had kept her explanation short and to the point like she told herself she would but now she needed to hold her emotions at bay. Keeping her face from showing her sadness she looked up at Kondou who seemed to have a sad look on his face, most likely from hearing the news about his friend. No one in the room spoke and Sakura was starting to think that they might kick her out even after her explanation.

"I won't be an inconvenience to you! I am skilled with a sword and have medical skills to offer!" The panic apparent in her voice as she stared at Kondou telling him exactly what they letter had told him. It looked like she was about to get a response when one of the other men in the room spoke first, "Even if you say so you are just a woman, what could you do to help us." Said a man with almost the same hair style as Kondou, except his hair was longer and more of an reddish, brunette color. He had a playful grin on his face, but Sakura took it more as him saying she was not needed there. Sakura slowly pulled a kunai out of the sleeve of her Yakata, making the men in the room stare in surprise once more, not only from the fact that she was able to hide the kunai so well but also that she had a weapon hidden in case things went bad for her. \_'She's smart.'\_ Thought one of the men with long violet hair tied to the side.

But the men were shocked once again when Sakura pulled up the sleeve to her yakata and put the blade to her forearm, making a cut deep enough that blood intimidatingly came flowing out. She felt someone approach her from behind, she looked up when the man from the night

before grabbed her arm. He pulled her arm up so that he could see the wound she had inflicted on herself. "There is no need to inflict physical pain upon yourself." The man said his eyes stern but there was something else... Concern? '\_No it couldn't be...' \_She thought pulling her arm away from the man. She didn't say a word to him or anyone else in the room, there was no need for words, her actions would be explained in moments.

Sakura lifted her right hand (opposite to the arm that she had cut) and placed her hand over her wound and closed her eyes in concentration. Slowly a green light emitted from her hand and surrounded the wound on her arm. This time there was no sound to indicate the men's surprise like before, their eyes stared as the wound the young girl had inflicted on herself started to heal. No one spoke and no sounds were made as the men watched in true astonishment. Minutes later the green glow faded and Sakura lifted her arm to reveal that there wasn't so much as a scar left to even indicate she had been injured. "She's no demon... to have such power... she must be an angel..." The man that had grabbed her arm earlier whispered breathlessly. Sakura figured he had meant for no one to hear it but her ears were so sensitive that she easily caught his words as he said them. Tears welled in her eyes and she wanted to throw her arms around the man for saying such words of kindness, even if she wasn't meant to hear them. But she restrained herself not wanting to surprise the man or embarrass herself.

Instead she turned her attention back to Kondou as he spoke, "Where did you learn something like that...?" He too seemed like he was asking himself but Sakura felt the need to answer his question anyway. "I've known how to do this ever since I can remember, my mother taught me before..." She didn't finish her sentence, these men didn't need to know her life story and she wasn't going to just tell them for the hell of it either. The room was quite once more but all eyes were on her and she was starting to feel uncomfortable. Sakrua looked down at her hands in her lap waiting for someone to say something.

"How?" A soft voice came from in front of Sakura, she looked up to see it was the man with glasses who had spoken. She felt some relief that someone had finally said something, making her nerve come back to her. "My mother had told me that something called Chakra is present in all living things, but demons such as myself are able to harness this Chakra and use it for many different things, such as healing." Sakura said trying to give a shortened explanation of what her mother had taught her over 18 years ago. She hoped that she had made some sense of how the healing process worked but she wasn't for sure if she did or not.

"If I am understanding you correctly, your talking about the Chakra pathways within the body that help keep the body balanced?" A man with violet long hair pulled to the side said looking at Sakura for confirmation, Sakura simply nodded her head happy someone understood her vague description. The men in the room all seemed to be contemplating something, Sakura took this time to really look at all the people in the room.

Starting at the left side of the room, first was a boy that looked about 16 or 17(Heisuke Toudou). He was one of the men she had bumped into the night before. Sitting down Sakura could tell he was taller than herself by about a little more than half a head. He had long

brunette hair that was tired up in a high ponytail and reached about his mid-back. His bangs were left in front of his face which was still very boyish, revealing his actual age. His eyes were an ocean blue color and shinned with ambition. He wore a less traditional sleeveless yellow shirt that cut low so it exposed his chest and ended about mid-thigh. He had a red and black sash wrapped around his waist, his pants were black and tight and ended mid calf.

Next was the man that had been the first to understand when Sakura had explained chakra to the men. (Saitou Hajime) He was a little taller than the boy he was sitting next to but also seemed to be older, possibly a year or two younger than Sakura, maybe about 20-21. He had long violet-black colored hair that fell into his face covering most of his right eye even though it was pulled into a low ponytail to the side. His face seemed very serious and his dark blue eyes were just as sharp. He wore a black traditional men's Yakata and a white scarf wrapped around his neck.

(Okita Souji) Next to him was a man that looked about Sakrua's age (22). He was the tallest out of everyone on the left side of the room and had medium length, dull reddish brown hair that was half pulled back. He had a sly look on his face, making him look like he was up to something and his emerald green eyes held a devious nature to them. He wore a black traditional top and a dull red, loose robe over it, with green hakama as pants. His legs were tapped from his ankle to just below his knee.

At the front of the room to Kondou's left was a man that looked to be about 27-28 (sannan Keisuke). He was the man that had brought her to this room, he had shoulder length black hair. And warm brown eyes, with large round glasses. He seemed to be about as tall as the tallest man to the left.

Next was Kondou, he looked like he was in his early 30's, maybe about 31 or 32. He had short black hair that was half pulled back while the other half was spiked up in the front. His angular face exposed his age and his charcoal colored eyes held wisdom and strength but also gentleness. He wore a traditional blue and tan Shikahusho with a black robe over it. He was probably in the middle when it came to height out of the other men in the room.

To the right of Kondou was the definition of a tall dark and mysterious man (Hijikata Toshizo). He looked to be about 27-28, he had long raven black hair that was pulled back into a ponytail where his bangs fell in front of his face. His eyes were a piercing violet color that seemed to look right through Sakura. His face seemed cold and indifferent, but something told her that he wasn't completely as cold as he was trying to let on. He seemed to be of average height when compared to the other men in the room and he also wore a traditional Shikahusho.

Next to Mr. tall, dark and mysterious was a much taller man around the age of 25-26 (Shinpachi Nagakurra). He had short blonde hair that was spiked out in a wild fashion, he had a green bandanna tied around his forehead. His ice blue eyes gave his face the least serious look, giving him an almost happy disposition. He wore a violet top that exposed most of his chest and stomach with a white robe on top with white hakama pants.

Lastly the man that would be sitting next to the happier man of the

group but was still sitting very close to Sakura (Harada Sanosuke). He looked like he was about 25-26 years old and probably the tallest man out of the group. He had long, dark auburn colored hair that was pulled back at the nape of his neck. His sharp golden eyes seemed to have a gentle softness to them. He wore a white half shirt with red trimming that was left completely open and ended just below his chest. His stomach, forearms and hands were wrapped with white and red tap, and he wore loose fitting grey pants. Sakura was starting to become a little wary of how close he was sitting next to her now that she was looking at him.

It was then that Kondou began to talk once more. "I will allow you to join us here as a member of the Roshigumi." Kondou said surprising everyone in the room including Sakura, she had thought for sure that he would turn her away.

Although Hijikata did not seem to be taking it very well. "Sir, how can you trust this girl, especially after knowing she is a demon." Hijikata questioned, normally he wouldn't question Kondou but this was something different and completely out of what he considered normal. Some of the other captains seemed to have the same thought process as Hijikata. It was strange to have someone they know nothing about just join the Roshigumi. Sakura's ears matted to her head once again, at what the dark haired man had said.

"Kondou, I have to agree with Hijikata. We don't know anything about this girl." Sannan said looking at his commander with a look that said he was very confused by this decision. Kondou let out a loud breath that he didn't know he had been holding, he knew his men would react like this, and they were right, he shouldn't trust this girl or take her claims as the truth under normal circumstances. But with the letter from Akio that un-doubtingly held his handwriting he felt he had no choice but to believe the girl.

"Normally I would put her under heavy watch for months before actually letting her do anything around here... But with this letter, I have no other choice but to believe this girl." Kondou said gesturing to the letter. The men gave Kondou more questioning looks, asking mentally how a piece of paper should allow this strange girl to enter the newly formed Roshigumi. "This is a letter from Akio Etsu, and it is his dying wish that we take this girl in." Kondou said explaining their unvoiced question. Akio was an old friend of everyone's. They had all trained together at Kondou's old dojou and had become good friends before Akio had left to start a dojou of his own.

Kondou held sadness in his eye as he looked at the letter, it was hard for him to believe that his good friend was gone, he had not seen him in years and now he would never see him again. Kondou looked up at the other men in the room they all seemed to have the same look of thought on their faces, Akio was a trustworthy man.

"I plan on following through with Akio's last wish." Kondou said with a stern voice, and this time no one opposed him. Sakura felt like a large weight had been lifted off her shoulders, if they had turned her away she would have had no where to go. Without wasting a second Sakura bent her head down so fast that her head hit the floor with a bang. Bowing she whispered her gratitude to the man that had saved her from a life of living on the streets.

"Lift your head child." Kondou said making Sakura twitch a bit, she hated being called a child, she was 22, well over the age to be considered a woman. But she said nothing and lifted her head to look at the man in front of her. "There are some things we need to discuss." Kondou seemed to become a little more serious and Sakura straightened her back, giving Kondou her full attention.

"I believe it would be best if you covered your ears and tail when walking around the outside of the compound." Kondou started, Sakura gave him a nod understanding what he was saying, if anyone was to see her ears or tail they would definitely not take too kindly to her, she had already experienced this first hand. She had no problem covering her ears and tail in front of people, although it was uncomfortable she knew it was necessary. "You know Kondou, if Serizawa finds out that you let a girl into our ranks he's bound to have a field day." Souji said giving another mischievous look toward Sakura. Kondou nodded, Serizawa was not known for his kindness and they were quite lucky he was away from the compound at the moment.

"Then you should stay on the west side of the compound Sakura, I would also like you to stay within the compound for a while. At least until I see that you are fit to go out on your own or on rounds. Until then I would like you to stay here as the Roshigumi's medic." Kondou finished, although Sakura and Akio had both stated that Sakura had sword skills he was not yet willing to let a woman go out on patrol, especially with how new the Roshigumi was. Sakura nodded she understood that she was going to be limited to what she could do for a while. It was only natural, she was just happy that she wasn't going to be kicked out onto the streets.

"Thank you very much." Sakura said before bowing once again.

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><p><strong>So what did you think?<strong>

\*\*I love Hakouki demon of the fleeting blossom and I was like dang Sakrua should get in on this reverse harem yumyness!\*\*

\*\*Well let me know what you thought, 10 reviews till the next chapter (to start off )\*\*

\*\*Until next time\*\*

\*\*MidnightShadow0110\*\*

\*\*P.S. I have already written the next few chapters for this story so once 10 reviews are out the next chapter shall go up!\*\*

## 2. A Bud can not Bloom without Sunlight

\*\*Alright here's the next chapter!\*\*

\*\*I wanted to thank a certain reviewer who reviewed as a guest, thank you so much for the review! Those kind of reviews are why I write! I love the things you pointed out and the tips you gave! They write wonderful and I hope you read this next chapter and like it and review as well! You are why I'm posting the next chapter early so

thank you!\*\*

\*\*I also wanted to point out one thing, in this awesome review I got I was told not to make this story a pity part and make sakura strong, I wouldn't have her any other way! :) she with although be quite timid and reserved in this chapter but she has been through some unfortunate events so I wasn't her character to build as she regains more confidence. Making her timid and reserved at first is more believable for the beginning I think. So I hope you all will stick with me for a bit while I build her up, just know she will become BA later and it will be great so if hope you guys stick with me.\*\*

\*\*Alright into the chapter, here is chapter 2 of demon of the fleeting cherry blossom.\*\*

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><p><strong>Three months later<strong>

It had been three months since Sakura had joined the Roshigumi. It was early morning, the sun had yet to peak over the horizon and Sanosuke was quietly on his way to the kitchen. For the past two months someone had been getting up before everyone else and making breakfast, normally everyone would switch off and make breakfast and dinner, but every time the person who was designated to make breakfast came to the kitchen to make it, it was already made and still hot. The strange thing was that the breakfast that was made was delicious, far better than anyone's cooking in the compound but no one claimed the credit for making the food. And it wasn't just Breakfast, it was dinner as well, Everyone had originally thought that Serizawa had hired a cook for some reason, but the man said he had done no such thing.

Then they started thinking it was Sakura but she also told them that she was not the one making it, which made sense since she often stayed in her room. It was quite easy to forget that she was even living in the compound. Sanosuke had seen her once maybe twice since she had arrived there, it was quite surprising, she had been there for three months but she mostly kept to herself. He understood at first that she might be shy but three months later he would have thought she would be more social. But he figured she would come out and talk to people when she was ready. But that was the last thing on his mind right at the moment. He was currently up so early because today was his day to make breakfast, and he was determined to find whoever was behind making such delicious food.

As he got closer to the kitchen he made sure he was much quieter, he wanted to catch this person, the one who makes food for everyone but doesn't show themselves to get the credit. As he got closer he could smell the delicious aroma, and as he got even closer he could hear the melodic hum of a woman's voice as she sang. What he saw behind the door way was none other than Sakura. She stood there in the middle of the kitchen grilling fish, she had on a shihakushou which Kondou had provided her with. He took this moment to really look at the young woman. She was quite petite, she would just barley reach his chest if he stood next to her. The Shihakusho she wore was for men, but she had somehow modified it so that it was tight around her waist, showing off her thin waist. Her shirt was white with red trimming and seemed a bit lose on her but gave him a good indication

of her chest. Which wasn't much to look at but still gave her some curves. Her pants were black and were very lose on her hips that were much wider than average, giving her a pair shape. Her hair was the brightest pastel pink and reached her hips, her eyes were a perfect jade contrast to her hair and were framed with dark lashes. She had her pink fox ears uncovered and free and there was a hole in the back of her pants so that her tail fell out and was free. Said tail was currently swaying back and forth in a wagging motion.

She was quite entrancing and now on top of that she was even more interesting, she never came out and talked to anyone, yet she made food for everyone. It was strange but he found himself smiling at the girl before him, she truly intrigued him. He wasn't paying attention so he stumbled a bit and knocked into some pans that were hanging on the wall, making Sakura jump. This caused some of the oil from the pan to splash up and hit her arm. Sanosuke quickly walked over to the girl but when he tried to pull her hand out so he could see the wound, she cowered down like she was getting ready for him to hit her. This made Sanosuke pause, why would she think he was going to hit her?

He stared at the young woman as she healed her wound still flinching away from Sanosuke. He tried to walk up to her again but she flinched away and held her ears with her hands trying to cover them. "I'm not going to hurt you." Sanosuke said calmly, this made Sakura straighten up and face him, but she didn't look up at him.

"Sorry." she said quietly making a questioning look fall on Sanosuke's face once again.

"What are you apologizing for?" Sanosuke asked not sure what she had to be sorry for, he actually wanted to thank her for not making him eat Souji's salty food anymore. There was a long pause of silence before Sakura spoke again.

"For... using the kitchen without permission..." she almost whispered her ears matted to her head as she looked down at the floor. Sanosuke just stared at her, not understanding why she was apologizing still.

There was another long silence before Sanosuke decided to break it. "Don't apologize, I actually wanted to thank you. Thank's to you I haven't had to eat Souji's nasty food for two months." Sanosuke said with a laugh trying to lighten the mood but Sakura just stared at him with a questioning look. Sanosuke sighed knowing that she wasn't comfortable around him and that was to be expected since she basically barricaded herself in her room most of the time. Sanosuke walked over to the stove and moved the pan that was still cooking the fish, there was no sense in letting it burn. "Can I help?" he asked looking at the pinkette with question, she returned his look with one of surprise before she nodded her head making the tall man smile. Sanosuke picked up a knife and started cutting vegetables, Sakura hesitated for a moment before going back to cooking the fish.

For a while they cooked and prepared the food in silence, but Sanosuke wasn't one for silence and after a while he had the urge to break the ice once again. "Sakura, why are you making food for everyone but not letting anyone know." The question had been eating at him for the last two months but now he knew who was making the food he was even more curious. Sakura stayed silence for a while and

Sanosuke thought she may not have heard him till he heard her speak, this time with more confidence.

"To thank them for giving me a place to stay and not turning me away." She said answering one of the mans questions but this just made him want to know more and so he asked again.

"But why not tell anyone?" He pressed trying to get more out of the girl. He waited a few moments hoping she would continue their conversation.

"It's not a proper thank's if I go seeking praise for it." She answered, her voice was so sincere that Sanosuke paused what he was doing for a moment. This girl truly did have a heart of gold, he couldn't think of a more selfless answer than what she just said. Sakura continued to cook, she didn't stop when answering Sanosuke's question because she honestly felt nerves around him. Actually she felt nervous around everyone, she wasn't used to being around people who didn't mind her being around, not once had anyone yelled at her, or thrown something at her. Nothing, they had actually all be quite polite, the only reason Sakura stayed in her room all the time was because she was afraid. Afraid that she would do something wrong and mess up the life she had been given in the Roshigumi.

She would rather stay away from everyone and be able to stay than be around people and get kicked out of the only place that would take her in. So to have someone that she normally avoided come and interrupt her cooking as surprising to say the least. She didn't know how to react around him, so she just stayed quite, she didn't say anything, unless he asked her something and she didn't look at him. She just cooked, but she didn't notice that Sanosuke was watching her as she did so. He had finished cutting up the vegetables and was watching as Sakura finished cooking, the sun was starting to come up and she looked like she was just about done but she still didn't notice him watching.

He didn't know why he was watching her, she just seemed to entrance him, he didn't know what it was. Maybe the ears or the tail or maybe the hair, or maybe how she justified why she did what she did but something about her interested him.

He didn't notice that he was drifting within his own mind until he noticed that Sakura had finished cooking and was starting to clean up. He started to help her seeing as he didn't want to just stand there and belatedly stare at her. And soon they were done, the kitchen was clean and the food had been served onto individual plates and was starting to cool down. The men would be down soon to eat and Sanosuke was about to grab a plate and take it to the dinning room when he noticed Sakura picking up her own plate and heading in the opposite direction. "Where are you going?" He voiced his immediate question to her departure.

Sakura paused in her steps but didn't turn around to face him. "To my room." She whispered still not looking at him, this is what she had done every day for the past two months, get up cook breakfast and then take her share to her room to eat. That's what she did every breakfast and every dinner, it was her routine.

"Why do you hide away in you room?" The question seemed out of place. Sanosuke was wondering why she was going to her room to eat but he

skipped that question and went straight for the question that he knew would follow that question. Sakura did turn around for this question but she didn't look at him, instead she looked down at the floor. Her ears were matted to her head, and Sanosuke was starting to notice that's what they did when she was sad or uncertain, or embarrassed.

There was a long pause, and Sakura turned to put her plate down because she knew Sanosuke wasn't going to let her leave until she answered his question. She could hear people starting to get up and get ready for the day, she was getting nervous again, she was always back in her room before anyone else was up, which was why she was so surprised when she saw Sanosuke earlier.

"I..." She paused, she wasn't sure if she wanted to tell this man why she didn't want to be around them, what if he got mad at her assumptions? What if he told her to leave because she insulted him. Her hands balled into her hands into fists, "I... don't want... to make... any of you... angry... because then you might make me... leave..." She whispered the last part and didn't look up to see the expression on Sanosukes face, she didn't want to see. But the thing she heard next made her look up, Sanosuke burst into a fit of laughter. The look on his face was pure humor and at first Sakura was confused, she didn't know what to think about it. And then he continued to laugh and after a while it started to make her mad, what the hell was so funny!?

She could feel the heat rising to her face, she felt like he was laughing at her expense and she hated it, so without thinking she lashed out, "Stop it!" She yelled before lightly hitting him over the chest, and as soon as he did it she regretted it. She immediately jumped back and pulled her hands over her mouth in a horrified gasp, "I'm sorry." She breathed out behind her hands.

Sanosuke's laughing had stopped and Sakura just stared at him mortified at what she had done. She almost ran out of the room when she saw Sanosuke smile at her. "See why don't you act like that more often."

His words surprised her, she expected him to lash back at her, to be angry, but not this. She was utterly speechless, so she just stared at him before finally asking, "What do you mean...?" Her voice was soft still afraid that he might change his mind and lash out at her of hitting him. Harada stared at her for a moment before answering her question.

"Your so reserved, and you stay away from people to begin with. You shouldn't feel the need to hold back, this is your home now. We aren't going to kick you out." Sanosuke's words came out like a river crashing into the pink haired demon.

Home...?

She hadn't ever called anywhere home, even when she lived with Akio she never thought of his place as her home. It was more like it was his home and he was sharing it with her.

Could she really call this place home? Sanosuke was telling her it was her home but she just didn't know. Sakura let out a long sigh, this was too much action for so early in the morning, but the other

half of what Sanosuke said gave her some hope. She should be herself, and they weren't going to kick her out? That was music to her ears, a definite answer to the question she had been asking herself ever since she was told she could join the Roshigumi.

They wouldn't make her leave, even if she showed them how she really was. This thought made her smile, she wasn't paying much attention to Sanosuke as he watched her emotions dance across her face.

Sanosuke smiled down at the woman she truly was a strange one, noticing that she wasn't paying much attention to him, he lifted her food tray out of her hands. This got the girls attention as she looked up at the tall man in shock, what the hell was he doing that was her food!

"Um what are you doing?" Sakura questioned as Sanosuke started to walk to the dinning area his tray in one hand and Sakura's in the other. You could hear the other captains entering the dinning room.

"Taking your food to the dinning room, if your going to make the food then your going to eat with everyone." Sanosuke said before he continued walking.

Surprised at his answer Sakura ran after the abnormally (to her at least) tall man panicking slightly at what she was about to partake in. Once she finally reached the man he was already setting her tray down next to his. "Is Sakura eating with us today?" Heisuke asked from across the room as he sat down with his own food tray, Sakura sighed there was no getting out of this now that everyone could see her.

So she slowly moved to sit down next to Sanosuke, "Thank you Harada-san." She whispered trying to stay polite in front of the men that were flitering into the room.

"Sano." The man next to her said making her look back at him with a questioning look. "Call me Sano, no need to be formal." Sano said giving the girl a smile, Sakura blushed a little not knowing what to say next so she just nodded and looked away. Sakura could hear the rest of the men enter the room and she smiled when she saw Kondou enter the room.

"Sakura its nice to see you joining us this morning." The dark haired man said surprising the young girl she hadn't expected that kind of reaction from the man in question. But it made her smile none the less.

"Ah I see the demon girl's going to join us today." Sakura looked over to see Souji enter the room the same mischievous smile on his face as when she first met him. She suddenly felt extra aware of the fact that her ears and tail were not hidden. She lifted her hands to cover her ears forgetting about the food in front of her.

"Hey Souji, that was pretty rude." Heisuke said defending Sakura to her surprise. This morning was just giving her one surprise after another, maybe she should come out of her room more often.

She gave Heisuke a thankful smile, she wasn't expecting everyone to act so normal around her, she had expected them to be wary of her

still. But they had had 2 months to get used to the idea that she was a demon so no one was surprised about her ears and tail any longer. "Souji Don't be mad that her cooking tastes great and yours tastes like crap." Sano said throwing a smirk in Souji's direction who seemed to shrug what he said off, he was only joking but it seemed like the others weren't taking it as such so he just backed down. He was a little surprised at what Sano had said though, he like the others had been truly enjoying the delicious food that was prepared for them.

"Wow wait you mean to say that your the one that's been making this food Sakura!?" Heisuke yelled in surprise, pointing at Sakura. Sakura lowered her head she wasn't exactly liking all the attention she was getting, maybe she had thought to soon about coming out of her room more. She slowly nodded her head in confirmation. she still didn't look up as the men started talking about the food she had been making, they were all compliments but she was still a bit embarrassed.

"That's wonderful, it truly is amazing food!" Kondou said praising Sakura like the others. There were other compliments thrown her way for a while before the room quieted down and everyone stopped talking to enjoy their meal, surprising to Sakura the meal went by pretty quick and painless for her.

She was heading back to her room when Heisuke stopped her. "Hey Sakura!" The young boy yelled from down the hall, she stopped walking and waited for the boy to catch up to her. "Serizawa found a boy who was beaten pretty badly on his way back here. Would you take a look at him and see if you can heal him?" Heisuke asked giving the girl a sheepish look, it was weird to ask someone who was older than him for a favor. Sakura simply smiled at the boy before nodding her head, it was of course what she was there to do, heal people. At least for the time being anyway.

"Let me go change first and you can take me to him." Sakura said not feeling as nervous around the boy. Maybe it was because he was younger than her, she didn't really know.

\* \* \*

><p>Sakura followed Heisuke to a room that was actually quite close to the one she was staying in. She had changed into another Shihkusho that hide her tail and put a red ribbon in her hair that was just thick enough to cover her ears. She was allowed to walk around freely as a girl as long as she stayed in the West side but she still had to hide her ears and tail. Heisuke opened the sliding door to reveal a boy that looked about the same age as him. He had long blueish hair with was tied in a high ponytail like Heisukes. Sakura noticed he was awake as he stared at them with his golden colored eyes. "Ah I see your finally awake." Heisuke said entering the room without hesitation, Sakura followed, closing the door behind her.</p>

The two knelt in front of the injured boy, Sakura took this time to look his physical appearance over. He had a lot of bruises everywhere and a few cuts, she could tell he was in a bit of pain. To prove her theory the young boy sat up quickly only to grab his arm in pain. "Where am I?" The boy questioned as he slowly laid back down. Heisuke looked at him for a moment before answering him.

"The Roshigumi's lodgings, on the southern end of the capital." Heisuke answered with a smile on his face, Sakura watched the boys interact, Heisuke seemed so sweet toward the young boy, although he was also pretty sweet to her as well. She figured that was just how he was towards others.

When the boy nodded his head in understanding where he was Heisuke continued with the conversation, "Well my name is Heisuke, Heisuke Toudo. And this is Sakura." The pinkette perked up when she heard her name and gave a slight bow to the boy in front of her. At first the boy didn't say anything and just stared at the ceiling.

"Ryunosuke, I'm Ryunosuke Ibuki." The boy finally answered, giving the two his name making Heisuke smile.

"Well it's nice to meet you Ryunosuke. You were pretty beat up when Serizawa brought you here but Sakura's going to fix you right up." Heisuke said with enthusiasm. Sakura nodded, taking that as her signal to look at the young boy. Sakura pulled the blanket away from the boys body making a small blush cross the boys cheeks. But Sakura didn't notice, she was concentrating on the task at hand instead as she let chakra flow to her hands as they lit up in a green glow. She started to scan the boys body to see the extent of his injuries, but she noticed he was started to squirm under her.

"What the hell is this!?" Ryunosuke yelled trying to get away from Sakura who stopped her searching. She wouldn't be able to see anything with him moving around like he was.

"Don't worry, Sakura has some great healing abilities, just relax. I'll go get you some food, I bet your hungry." Heisuke said waving off the boys panic and he left to go get some extra food. The boy seemed to calm down after that, making Sakura sigh, she knew her abilities were not normal but to freak out like that was strange as well. Once the boy was settled she went back to scanning his body with her chakra. She didn't say anything as she got to work with healing his major injuries. He had a fractured rib and a few cuts that bothered her and she healed the worst of the bruising but left the lesser bruises. It took about 30 minutes to heal him and by the time she was done Heisuke was back with food for the boy.

"I healed your major injuries but your lesser injuries are fine to heal on their own, you should take it easy for a while." Sakura said, telling the boy what she had done and how he would be able to fully recover. Ryunosuke nodded his head before sitting up, Sakura tried to protest and push him back down but he didn't seem to want to listen to her. He slowly slipped his shirt back on.

Without warning the boy stood up, "What are you doing, didn't you hear her you need to take it easy." Heisuke said looking up at Ryunosuke, setting the bowl of rice he had brought down.

The boy didn't seemed to be listening as he slipped on his shoes, "I appreciate this but I can not impose on you." Ryunosuke said grabbing his sword, which was in the cornering of the room and started to head out the door.

Sakura and Heisuke ran after him, "I said you need to rest, me healing you will have done nothing if you push yourself." Sakura said sounding much more confident than she had all day. When it came to

healing she excepted who she was healing to listen and do as she said, she knew what she was talking about.

The boy didn't seem to be listening as he continued down the hall way, it wasn't till Ryunosuke came upon Sano and Shinpatchi that he had to stop. "Heisuke who is this?" Sano asked looking at the boy who was being chased by Heisuke and Sakura.

"This is the kid Sweizawa picked up on his way back to the capital. Sakura just healed him and now he says hes leaving." Heisuke said telling the older man what what going on at the moment. Ryunosuke started to try and walk past the two older men but was stopped when Sano grabbed him by the collar. Ryunosuke struggled against Sano's grip yelling at him to let go before finally getting away from him.

"It's all well and good that your feeling better, but I can't agree with you leaving without thanking your the person who saved you or healed you." Sano said indicating to Sakura and Serizawa. The boy just scoffed not thinking he needed to listen to anything the man said.

"Its not like I ever asked anyone for their help." Ryunosuke said before turning his head away. An angry look fell over Sano's and Shinpatchi's faces. It looked like Shinpatchi was going to yell something but Sano beat him to the punch. Literally hitting the young boy over the head before Sakrua could saying anything to stop him. "What was that for!" Ryunosuke yelled holding his head in pain, Sakura pushed past Heisuke and walked toward Sano.

"Regardless of whether or not you asked for it, you should think about who you have to thank for being alive and well." Sano said noticing that Sakura had moved to stand by him and was giving he young boy a sympathetic look.

"Sano... Was it really necessary to hit him?" Sakura asked givng the man a questioning look.

Shinpatchi shook his head, Knowing Sakura didn't know Sano very well. "Sano doesn't hold back when it comes to men." Shinpatchi said giving Ryunosuke a warning and Sakura an explanation. Sakura looked from Shinpatchi to Sano then to Heisuke who nodded letting Sakura know it was true.

"what's your name kid?" Sano asked looking down at the young boy who was quite a bit shorter than him. Sakura noticed this, Sano was the tallest man she had every seen, he just towered over her, although so did Ryunosuke. Sakura frowned she was begining to realize that these men made her feel shorter than she was.

"I already told that guy my name, you should ask him." Ryunosuke said pointing to Heisuke, Sakura gave him a questioning look. The boy truly was being rude and didn't seem to have any manors. Sano gave the boy another anger look before he started to pop his knuckles.

"You've got guts, apparently one blow to the head wasn't enough to give you manors." Sano said staring at the boy. Sakura had to stop herself from laughing at that, she had been thinking almost the same thing just seconds before.

Relizing that Sano was going to hit him over the head again Ryunosuke straightened up, "You don't need to hit me for every little thing! I'm Ryunosuke Ibuki..." The boy finally said whispering the last part and looking away from the 4 in front of him. This time Sakura did laugh a bit making the men look back at her and smile, she had been so timid during breakfast it was nice to see her happier. But the moment was short lived when Ryunosuke decided to back mouth once again. "You know its rude to ask for someones name before giving your own." Sano sighed this kid just didn't know when to quite but he decided not to hit him this time.

"So now your trying to be a smart mouth. But you are right, I'm sorry. My name is Sanosuke Harada, and this is..." Sano said looking toward Shinpatchi to give the young boy his name as well.

"Shinpatchi Nagakura." Shinapachi said finishing Sano's sentance while introducing himself. Ryunosuke still didn't seem to want to be corgial to either of the men so he continued to scowl at them.

He looked away before asking, "And who is it I need to thank." Ryunosuke asked making Sano give the boy an angry look once more, He grabbed the boy by his collar, picking him and and placing him in front of Sakura.

"You can start with her, she was kind enough to heal your sorry butt." Sano said pushing the boys head down and forcing him to bow. Sakura blushed at the scene in front of her, no one had ever bowed to her before, even though he was being forced it it still had never happened before.

"Hey, there's no need to push me!" Ryunosuke yelled trying to stand up straight but Sano wasn't letting go.

"Just thank her!" Sano said hitting the boy on top of his head again, he was starting to getting irritated. Ryunosuke struggled for a bit longer before finally giving in and thanking the pinkette in front of him.

Sakura's blush went from pink to red, she had never been thanked before by anyone other than Akio. She didn't know what to do, "I, um... No.. Its no ... problem..." she finally got out.

Sano, Shinpatchi and Heisuke smiled at the girls antics. Sano knew it would be a while before she was able to act normal around them but this was a start.

\* \* \*

><p><strong> alright just a bit of a filter chapter for some character development. What did you guys think?<strong>

\*\*The next chapter will have a lot more action in it but if felt this chapter was needed for the plot and the characters.\*\*

\*\*If I get some reviews tonight I might go ahead and post the next chapter so it completely up to you guys how fast you want the next chapter up.\*\*

\*\*Thank you and please review!\*\*

\*\*Until next time,\*\*

\*\*MidnightShadow0110\*\*

### 3. To Start a New, but Never Forget the Old

\*\*Alright, so I haven't been getting very many reviews for this story and I'm still going to update for the time being so you guys can get a feel for the story.\*\*

\*\*I'm hoping for more reviews for this chapter and would really appreciate hearing what you guys think!\*\*

\*\*Well here is the next chapter for Demon of the fleeting cherry blossom, hope you enjoy!\*\*

\* \* \*

><p>Sakura sat quietly in the dinning room eating her food. It had been about a month after the first time Sakura had come to eat with them and since then she had started coming to breakfast and dinner with the others. She normally was pretty quite but when she was asked a question or when someone talked to her she would respond.</p>

Sano knew he couldn't expect her to change and act normal around everyone just yet but she was getting there. Everyone was currently chatting away and quite loudly Sakura noticed. "Sorry for all the ruckus, they are animals." Sano voiced as Heisuke yelled out about Shinpatchi taking some of his fish.

Sakura looked up at the red head and smiled slightly, "No it's alright, its quite entertaining." Sakura said before quickly covering her mouth. '\_That was probably rude of me to say...' Sakura thought, thinking she might have offended someone, she ears matted to her head. Sano gave her a sheepish look like she really did have a long way to go but at least she was around people now.

He patted her head lightly smiling at her, "You are right they are entertaining." He said trying to give Sakura some confidence but once he felt her tense under his touch and saw her tail stand straight up he figured something was wrong. He quickly moved his hand away from her head thinking that he had gone to far and made her feel uncomfortable. As soon as his hands left her head Sakura quickly covered her ears, as a blush dusted her cheeks.

"Hey Sano what did you do to her?" Heisuke yelled from the other side of Sano. He was about to defend himself when Sakura spoke up.

"No he didn't... do anything wrong." Sakura said trying to make sure Heisuke didn't get the wrong idea. She was staring at the floor her hands still on her ears, her tail had relaxed but everyone was looking at her confused so she felt the need to elaborate. "No one has ever touch my ears before..." She wanted to say no man has ever touched her ears before but that sounded a bit strange. Sakura didn't have much experience with the opposite sex, due to the fact that no man would approach her in fear of being eaten by her or something like that.

"Sorry Sakura, I wont—" Sano started to say but Sakura cut him off surprising not only him but Sakura herself.

"No its alright... its nice... you just surprised me is all." Sakura said looking up and smiling at him when she said the last part. This made Sano and everyone else in the room smile, Sakura's smiles were something that the men loved to see on the pink haired demon. Everyone quieted down for a while after that and continued to eat, Sakura took this time to look at everyone in the room. To her right was Sano, and next to him were the loudest people in the room, Heisuke and Shinpatchi.

On the opposite side of the room was Hajime, Soujj and a man she met later on Inoue, who refused to look her in the eye. He was one of the few people other than the men she met first who knew of her demonic blood, She figured it was maybe asking too much for everyone to be comfortable with her around, she was mostly glade that he wasn't screaming at her to leave. At the very front of the room was Kondou, Hijikata and Sannan, she had never had to talk to Sannan but always gave her strange looks from across the dinning hall. Sakura looked toward Kondou, after she had joined the Roshigumi Kondou often came and visited her in her room before she started eating breakfast with the others. She had realized he was a kind man, he reminded her a lot of Akio, and that was a bittersweet feeling. But she had come to like Kondou, and trust him, as much as she could trust someone that is.

"Hey Sakura there's been something I've been wanting to ask you." Heisuke said pulling Sakura from her thoughts. She looked up at the younger boy giving him a look that said he could ask her. "I know you are a demon, but how is it you have ears and a tail?" The question caught her off guard, no one had ever asked her something like that before. In fact if people saw her ears or tail their first reaction was to run or chase her away, not ask her about them.

"Heisuke that's kind of rude." Shinpatchi said giving Heisuke a reprimanding look that made Sakura giggle. Everyone looked over toward the girl, a few others had thought the comment to be a little rude as well but Sakura took it in no such way.

"It's quite alright Shinpatchi. In all honesty I would assume everyone would have this question but no one has ever asked me." Sakrua said giggling still finding it funny the way heisuke had asked such a simple question yet everyone jumped down his throat for it. "To be honest I don't know exactly why I look the way I do. But when I was younger my mother would tell me that the blood of fox demons was strong in our family." Sakura had a small smile on her face as she seemed to be off somewhere else.

Although Sakura had lost her mother at a young age she could still remember what she looked like. Sakura came back from her thoughts, she noticed that everyone was still looking at her and she blushed embarrassed that she had mentally wondered off. "Sorry I know its not a good explanation but I don't really know much about my family or blood line myself." Sakura said finishing her explanation, she gave everyone a soft smile before she continued eating her breakfast. Everyone seemed to take her explanation well and didn't question her but there was still questions lingering in the air and Sakura started to notice this, so she set her chopsticks down, done with her

meal.

Sakura noticed particularly that Souji had a very mischievous look on his face, everyone looked toward him as he randomly stood up and walked over to Sakura. Sakura gave Souji a nervous look as he crouched down next to her. "I want to see something." He said mostly to himself but everyone in the room heard him, and without a warning he grabbed Sakura's tail and ran his hand over its silky furr. Sakura let out a surprised scream as she jumped to her feet, she grabbed at her sword that she always kept at her hip ever since Kondou decided to give it back to her and unsheathed it. Without thinking Sakura swung her sword at Souji's arm, she was surprised when he blocked her sword with his, which he also always kept on hand like the rest of the men. Sakrua quickly sheathed her sword, so not to alarm anyone that she was really going to attack, "Why would you do that!?" Sakura yelled still reeled up from Souji's actions a moment ago, Souji just smiled at her with the same mischievous look.

"Just as I thought, its just as soft as it looks." Souji said giving the pink haired girl a smile but Sakura knew that he had had a feeling that what he was doing wasn't appropriate.

"Don't you have any manners!? Its common knowledge to know that anything below the waist is considered intimate and should not be touched like that, especially in public! My tail is no exception!" Sakura yelled her face turning five shades of red she didn't care if she was being over the top and she wasn't going to back down. She didn't want to be touched in that way especially by a man she didn't know, she was about to scream at him some more but someone seemed to beat her to it.

"Souji have some respect." Hijikata finally spoke for the first time that morning, Souji looked over at the second in command and then at everyone else in the room. They all had a look of anger, mixed with surprise on their faces. Souji let out a sigh knowing full well that he had crossed a line, but he just couldn't help himself, from the few times he had met Sakura outside of breakfast she seemed to always almost get reeled up by something he did. But she never really reacted, so he couldn't pass up an opportunity to actually see her go off.

"Ah jeez, I didn't think it was that big of a deal. I'm sorry." Souji tossed an apology in Sakura's direction but she could tell that it wasn't sincerer. Sakura sighed knowing that, that was the best she was going to get out of him, and she was honestly still impressed that that he had blocked her sword.

There was another long period of silence before Hajime spoke, "I did not realize you had been taught in the way of the quick draw." It wasn't a question more of a statement that brought Sakura's attention to him.

"Now that you mention it that was quite fast." Sano said looking at Sakura, all of the men turned to Sakura in agreement they were quite impressed. Sakura blushed at all the attention she was getting.

"That's right, I've been meaning to test your abilities for some time now, to see if you can go out on rounds. This would be a perfect time to test you." Kondou said making the group look toward him, he had

been meaning to test Sakura for a while now but he wanted her to associate herself with the men before testing her and letting her go out. Although she had just been joining them for breakfast it was something better than what she had been doing.

"Sir, I would like to be the one to test her if you do not mind." Hajime said surprising all of the men in the room. Sakura thought about it for a moment, she actually enjoyed a good spar every now and then. But she hardly go the chance to do so since there were so few men willing to be near her.

"That sounds like a great idea." Kondou said smiling at Hajime and Sakura wondering how Sakura would fair against the younger man. But everyone else in the room seemed a little concerned.

"Kondou is it necessary to use Hajime, why not one of the newer members?" Hijikata said not thinking the spar would be fair, Saitou was a gifted swordsman, one of their best in fact and he had no idea what Sakura was capable of. Sakura stood up from her place on the floor once again, a sly smirk on her face, there were two things she was certain of if anything else, she was a gifted healer as well as a swordsman. She was humble about her gifts normally but when she is challenged her personality takes a 180 on her humbleness.

"No need to worry about me Hijikata-san, I'm more worried about what kind of injuries I'm going to have to heal after this." Sakura said the smirk still on her face as she looked Hajime in the eye, mentally challenging him. Saitou's face seemed to be blank but Sakura could have sworn she saw a smirk grace his features.

Loud laughter brought Sakura's attention to Souji who had gone back to his seat as well. He was holding his stomach laughing, "Challenging Hajime like that is freaking awesome!" Souji said in between laughs like Sakura's proposal was funny but she assumed he was not saying this to be offensive. On the contrarily she thought it was more taunting of Hajime than anything.

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><p>Sakura found herself facing the violet haired man in one of the courtyards in the captains quarters. The other captains sat along the edge of the porch area watching the two. There was a long period of silence as the two seemed to stare each other down, waiting for the other to make a move. After a while Sakura realized that Hajime was not going to make the first move and she was going to have to do it. Without warning and without a sound, Sakura gripped the hilt of her sword and unsheathed it so fast that it seemed to appear in her hand. Without missing a beat Sakura charged at Hajime, sword ready to strike. She moved so fast that it almost didn't seem possible. Sakura brought her sword down on the man who had yet to move even an inch. In seconds Hajime unsheathed his sword, deflected Sakura's attack and brought his sword back around to strike at Sakura.</p>

she almost wasn't quick enough to block his attack but she did, surprising Hajime and everyone else in the yard. The two went into a battle of strength and Hajime realized that he wasn't going to be able to go easy on Sakura. Maybe not going full out but a step more advanced than what he was doing. He pushed off Sakura's sword with his own, giving Sakura no time to react as he came at her again. But surprisingly she was able to block his attack once again.

In truth Sakura was having a hard time keeping up with Hajime , he kept increasing his speed and she was already at her limit. She was quite impressed with the younger man, although he was only a year younger than her he was far more advanced than she was. His skills seemed to be years beyond her own and she didn't even think he was giving it his full power, which made Sakura mad. She blocked another of his attacks, she had been unable to attack the man since her first strike and now he had her on the defensive and he wasn't going to let her have the upper hand.

She was trying to come up with a strategy to try and get the upper hand on the man but that made her lose focus on what was happening right in front of her. She brought he sword up to block Hajime's attack once again but she didn't put enough power in it and he was able to disarm her easily. Before Sakrua knew it Hajime had his sword at her neck, the match was over and she had lost. She let out a deep breath as Hajime removed his sword from her neck and sheathed it again. Sakura bowed to the man as thanks for the spar and he gave her a small bow back out of respect.

Sakura was walking over to pick up her sword when she heard the rest of the men behind her talking. "Wow I haven't seen Hajime have to actually try to beat someone in a long time!" Heisuke yelled praising Sakura for how long she had lasted. Shinpatchi nodded in agreement and Sano smiled at Sakura giving her a nod of approval. Kondou was truly surprised by Sakura's ability, he hadn't expected such skill from Sakura but she proved him and the rest of the men wrong.

"Well I think that proves you are more than capable of taking care of your self on patrol." Kondou said smiling at Sakura then looking to Hijikata, who simply said yes before looking away, he was actually just as surprised as everyone else, such ability in such a small girl was truly amazing. Sakura blushed at all the praise she was receiving, Akio had told her she was good and she knew she was good but she had lost yet they were all praising her? Hajime must be even better than she thought for her to get this kind of reaction from the group. She slowly sheathed her sword wondering what might have happened if Hajime had been serious with her.

Sakura let out a sigh not wanting to think about how that might have ended. "Would you like to start going out on rounds?" Kondou asked noticing that Sakura didn't seem all that happy about her spar or anything really. Sakura didn't realize that anyone was still talking to her and brought her attention back to Kondou, who was giving her a questioning look. She gave him a small smile and nodded her head up and down. In all honestly she was getting tired of sitting in her room all the time and was running out of things to do in there to pass the time. So going out on rounds would at least give her something to do during the day so she was happy to do it.

"Why don't you go out with Souji and Hajime on patrol tomorrow then." Kondou said with a smile on his face, but Sakura wasn't exactly happy with who he choose for her to go with. She was still a little frazzled by the incident that happened in the dinning area earlier.

She looked over at said captain and he had his sly smirk on his face, "Just don't get in our way, or I'll kill you." He said before walking off, Sakura felt her eye twitch at his words. Who the hell tells a

comrade that hes going to kill them!?

She really didn't understand Souji quite yet but she didn't really understand any of the men yet. She smiled to herself knowing that she was going to have to start socializing with them more often. Sakura looked toward Kondou and nodded agreeing with going out on patrol the next day. Kondou nodded back and everyone started to dispersed after that.

\* \* \*

><p>Sakura was walking toward her room, after the spar she decided that she needed a bath and she was currently heading toward her room. She had a towel on her head as she tried to dry her hair. She had already dressed herself not wanting to walk around with so many men in a bath rob. She was passing by a room that she had never been by before when she started to hear yelling. "Go get me some more Sake dog!" A gruff masculine voice boomed from inside the paper door. Sakura slowed down her pace a little curious as to what was going on, she had never heard that voice before.</p>

"Alright, Alright!" Another voice yelled, this time she recognized the voice and suddenly the sliding door opened to reveal Ryunosuke. Apparently Ryunosuke was being kept around the Roshigumi to repay his debt to Serizawa for saving his life. She had heard the other men talk about how he was being treated like a dog but she had not seen the boy since the day she had healed him, so she was a bit surprised to see him now.

"Sakura!" Ryunosuke yelled surprised to see the girl as well but he soon regretted it after he said her name.

"Whose out there dog?" The same gruff voice yelled as a man emerged from inside the room. He was tall just like the others, he had brunette almost shoulder length hair with grey highlights. He wore his hair half pulled up like Kondou but when she looked into his eyes all she saw was sharp anger and it scared her.

"Well who is this creature, no one here can afford to buy a Geisha." The man she assumed was Seriwaza said lurking at her as he approached her. Sakura backed up she didn't like the look in the mans eyes. She shook her head back and forth unable to find the words that she wasn't a Geisha, but the man continued to approach her.

"Seriwaza this girl is not a Geisha." Ryunosuke said jumping in front of Sakura to block the older mans view, but this only seemed to anger him.

"Get out of my way dog!" Seriwaza yelled knocking the young boy out of his way so that he could see Sakura once again. The man continued to approach her and once he was close enough he grabbed her hand. "Come on, come pour me some sake." the man said pulling her toward his room, Sakura tried to pull away but Seriwaza was much stronger than her. she continued to struggle which started to anger the man who had a grip on her, his grip tightened painfully.

"Stop it please." Sakura whispered finally finding her voice, she had never been in this situation before but the mans grip didn't seem to lesson at all. Remembering that she had her sword on her hip she started to grab for it only to find this to be the worst thing she

could do. Once Seriwaza noticed that she had a sword and was grabbing for it his anger peaked.

Without warning he pulled out a metal folded fan and harshly hit Sakura across the face with it. "you dare try to pull a sword on me!" he yelled as Sakura fell to the ground with a thud she could fell bruising starting to form on her cheek and she felt hot liquid start to run down her face. The fall caused the towel that was on her head to fall and reveal her ears making the man stare with shock.

Sakura looked up at the man, she could see the disgust in his eyes, she heard a gasp and looked to the side to see Ryunosuke staring at her with shock in his eyes. "What kind of beast are you?!" Seriwaza yelled striking Sakura across the face once again making the cut from before open wider, she thought she heard a crack but she didn't have time to check and see. Seriwaza was about to strike at her again when Ryunosuke grabbed a hold of his arm stopping him.

"Seriwaza-san stop!" Ryunosuke yelled trying to make the man stop but he didn't seem like he was going to.

"Ryunosuke whats with all the noise?" Sakura heard Sano's voice boom from a little ways down the hall. She looked down toward his direction and saw Sano, Souji, Heisuke and Shinpatchi walking toward them. The four men notice Sakura on the floor and were shocked at what they saw. Sakura's right cheek was swollen, black and bleeding pretty bad, and seeing Ryunosuke holding Seriwaza back it only took a second for them to realize what had happened. "Heisuke go get Kondou and Hijikata." Sano yelled as he and the others ran toward Sakura. Shinpatchi got behind Seriwaza and held the man back while Sano and Souji crouched in front of Sakura. Sakura flinched away as Sano tried to look at her cheek making Souji stand up in anger.

"Seriwaza what reason do you have to hit a woman?!" Souji yelled, anger in his voice, surprising Sakrua, she hadn't expected that from Souji, maybe from Sano or Shinpatchi but not Souji.

"That is not a woman, that is a beast!" Seriwaza yelled back making Sakura flinch she hadn't been called something like that since she arrived at the Roshingumi. She felt herself trembling, she didn't know if it was out of anger or fear. She knew that everyone could see her trembling but she didn't care everything stung, the mans words and his actions toward her, she was conflicted between lashing back out at the man and keeping quite. She felt Sano cover her ears with his arm as he pulled her to him, trying to physical shield her from the older man.

"Seriwaza-san please calm down." Kondou's voice echoed through the hall and it gave Sakura some relief, Kondou would stop the man.

Hijikata took one look at the situation and his eyes narrowed at the older man. "Seriwaza explain."Hijikata said his voice stern and demanding but the voice that spoke next held even more authority.

"No you all explain this" He yelled pointing at Sakura, "to me." the men all looked at each other, this had been something that they wanted to avoid but there was no way in avoiding it now.

\* \* \*

><p>Sakura sat in between Sano and Souji on Kondou's right while Hijikata was on his left and in front of him was Seriwaza the other men had been called to the meeting room as well but they sat behind Kondou and the others. Next to Seriwaza was a man that Sakura had never met before name Izue and behind him was Ryunosuke.</p>

"Seriwaza-san Sakura came to me 5 months ago asking for a place to stay. She had been raised by an old friend of mine." Kondou started to explain looking at the angry older man in front of him. Seriwaza looked from Kondou to Sakura who flinched and looked away.

"And when were you going to tell me you allowed a beast into our headquarters?" Seriwaza said hissing as he said beast, making Sakura flinch once again, now she knew why they had all wanted her to stay away from this man.

"I had planned to make Sakura a part of the Roshingumi and I planned to tell you about her then." Kondou said trying to keep his composure what he failed to say was that he planned to keep the fact that she was a demon from him for as long as he could.

Seriwaza scoffed at this, "You planned to let this beast become apart of the Roshingumi and you thought I would allow it?" Seriwaza said anger still in his voice. Sakura wanted to just disappear, she didn't like this. She had never been succumbed to this kind of abuse before, normally people would make her leave and that would be the end of it. She never had to sit idly while someone verbally abused her. She wanted to say something but she knew it would only make the situation worse so she sat quietly.

"Sakura has an extraordinary healing ability and has proven to have excellent sword skills." Kondou said looking toward Sakura but she didn't seem to notice till Souji nudged her with his elbow, and gestured for her to get up. Sakura stared at him for a moment before realizing they wanted her to demonstrate her ability. Sakura stood up and knelled in front of Seriwaza, trying to ignore his looks of disgust. She placed her hand on her wounded cheek and let her chakra flow to her hands. Seriwaza's eyes lit up with surprise when he saw her hand glowing green and more surprise fell over him as he witnessed her wounds start to heal right in front of him.

After Sakura had finished healing her wound she looked up to the man who had inflicted the wound. Seriwaza had composed himself and stared at Sakura with a vacant look before standing up to leave.

Before he got through the door he stopped, "I will allow her to join to Roshingumi, at least if she is killed it won't be a loss to us." Seriwaza said before leaving.

\* \* \*

><p>The next day Sakura went out on patrol with Souji and Hajime just as planned. She of course wore her cloak knowing that the Roshingumi couldn't be seen with a woman even if they had not yet made a name for themselves. The cloak felt a lot heavier than it used to, maybe it was because she was used to wearing around her ribbon and hiding her tail in her pants instead. She let out a sigh, although it was

heavy it did keep her warm, and hidden.<p>

Sakura could feel Souji's eyes on her back, he had been watching her ever since they had left the compound and it was starting to make her nervous. She remembered the day before when he had stood up for her, it had surprised her he was the last person she thought would stand up for her. She shook her head letting out a sigh, she just wanted to forget about yesterday and avoid Seriwaza at all costs, although she had only been with the Roshingumi for 5 months she had gotten used to not being called a monster. So for her to be forced to endure that mans words after so long of not hearing those names really hurt her, not to mention the wound to her cheek. She kept walking with the two men, they had already walked through half the city and Sakura was finding the rounds be less than entertaining. But she had made a commitment and she was going to stick to it, whether she liked it or not, maybe she could ask to go out with someone else tomorrow. she looked toward Hajime, he never really talked she noticed and Spouji wasn't one for conversation it seemed while they were out on rounds.

She continued walking with the men trying to actually scan the town but she found her mind wandering. She wondered how she would be able to help out the Roshigumi, she wanted to do more than go on patrol and heal the men's wounds. Although she knew these were important things but she wanted to do more, she didn't know what but she felt like there was something more she could do.

"I know it doesn't seem like much now, but by doing these rounds we are making a name for our selves. That way the people will trust us to protect them." Souji said walking up to Sakura and keeping pace with her. Sakura looked up at the man next to her surprised by his sudden statement, it was like he knew exactly what she was thinking. She looked back down and smiled, knowing the meaning behind the little things like rounds. She continued forward nodding her head at what Souji said knowing that she was be apart of something big later on.

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><p><strong>Well what did you guys think?<strong>

\*\*I'm really trying to build up the characters so that later on when things happen you all aren't like where the hell did that come from?!\*\*

\*\*So let me know what you think please!\*\*

\*\*I really love getting reviews and I haven't been getting too many for this story so it makes it more discouraging to post new chapters but I'm hoping once enough chapters are up people will start to review more.\*\*

\*\*Please review!\*\*

\*\*Until next time\*\*

\*\*MidnightShadow0110\*\*

\*\*Chapter update!\*\*

\*\*NOTE FOR THIS AND OTHER STORIES: I know I have been the absolute worst with updating not only this story but my others as well, I will be working on my updating skills. However I have gone back and read over some of my other stories and realize that I don't quite like the direction I was taking them or the way I started them off so a lot of my stories I will be rewirting/revamping. I'm not quite sure yet but I might abandon some of the stories but please don't freak out just yet. If there is another story (other than this one which I am obviously continuing) that you like or love or can't live without that I am writing please just inbox me what it is or post it in a review! I will be continuing with "An angels Blood" since it is so far along, I will also be continueing with "Ripple Effect," "The tainted cherry blossom," and "Of a mothers love and sacrifice." Again I'm sorry for my bad updating habbits but I should be changing that soon.\*\*

\*\*ANOTHER NOTE!: I have a few new stories that I have been working on as well but I'm trying to be proactive so any new story I post be assured that I have already written at least two more chapters ahead of time so that they are ready to be posted so pleast don't hate me!\*\*

\*\*Alright on to what we have all come here to do here is chapter 4 of Demon of the Fleeting Cherry Blossom!\*\*

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><p>The Ravenous Demon called Hate</p>

A month had gone by and Sakura continued to go out on her rounds with the Roshigumi, she was always either with Souji, Sano or Hajime. Going out on rounds served to be just a boring as the first day she had gone out, occasionally a fight would break out and herself or one of the captains would have to break it up but other than that, rounds were pretty boring. Sakura was currently arguing with Sano, like she ended up doing most of the time when she was put on his squad.

Sakura had come out of her shell quite a bit over the past month; she was more out spoken and acted normal around the men. She still sometimes shayed away from certain situations but was normal in most situations. Now that she had started going out on rounds more the men all started to get to know the pink haired woman. They seemed to accept her presense for the most part but some still were a it weary around her.

"If you keep going out and drinking all the time you are going to come back with alcohol poisoning and you know whose going to have to heal you? Me!" Sakura said a little louder than she needed to. She had found that Sano, Shinpatch and Heisuke often went out drinking in shimabara and she often yelled at Sano for not being responsible. In all honestly she wanted to go out as well, but being a woman she wasn't aloud out at night by herself and had yet to think of herself as close enough to go out with the men either so she was often stuck at home at night after rounds.

"Your just mad because you want to go out drinking too." Sano said

calling her out. Sakura blushed, surprised that he knew exactly what she was thinking, she was thankful that the hood of her cloak covered her face so Sano couldn't see her blush.

Sakura just looked away not saying anything else, which made Sano laugh knowing that he had hit the nail on the head. He made a mental note to take her out drinking sometime, or at least bring some sake home. Sano had come to like Sakura, she was quite outgoing once she came out of her shell, and he knew that she had not quite fully emerged from said shell yet either. He found out on top of her skills in healing and the sword arts she was also extremely smart and he found talking with her quite enjoyable, even if she did like to start arguments with him, he found it entertaining. Honestly he was just glade that she had finally started to become part of the Roshigumi and didn't hide away in her room any more.

Sano adjusted the spear on his back as he and Sakura headed for the compound. The sun was starting to go down and they were done with their rounds for the day. Sakura signed knowing that the day was over and she could relax for the evening. They had just entered the gates to the compound when a small child came running from around the corner crying like he had seen something horrible. Sakura was tempted to follow the child to see if he was alright but she felt it was more urgent to check out what had upset the boy first. Sakura and Sano rounded the corner that the young boy had fled from only to see Shinpatchi and Hajime standing a few feet away, blood splattered across their cloths and skin. Sakura ran up to the two concerned to see if any of the blood belonged to them. Sakura was about to check over Hajime when he lifted her hand away from him, "This blood is not our own."

Sakura nodded her head in understanding but this still left the question of what happened, floating in the air. It was at that time that Hijikata, and Sannan came outside to see what all the noise had been about. "What happened?" Sannan voiced the question that had been lingering in Sakura's mind but the two just sighed and looked at each other.

"Why don't we let them get cleaned up first." Sano said as the group nodded and followed the two men to the well so that they could wash up. It was after two buckets were filled and the two men had started to clean off their clothes that Shinpatchi spoke.

"We followed some rogue samurai into a family lodge, but the head clerk stopped us." His voice seemed a bit angry which Sakura could understand why. Shinpatchi and Hajime had obviously been trying to help the clerk by following the rouge samurai into the lodge but yet he had told them to leave.

"He stopped you?" Sannan asked, confused on why the clerk refused their help from the start, surly he did not want to deal with rouge samurai in this lodge.

"Yeah, he kept saying, who ordered you to do this? Get out of here and get the local police." Shinpatchi answered his voice still holding slight anger to it. This made Sakura's blood boil a bit too, she had encountered a few situations were civilians had refused hers or someone else from the Roshigumi's help even when they were just trying to do what was right. It made no sense to her, they should be happy that they were helping them but yet the civilians treated them

like they were no better than the rogue samurai.

"And that's when a fight ensued." Hijikata said as Shinpatchi sheaded his shirt off his back to clean his chest off. Sakura blushed a bit at this and turned away, feeling a bit awkward.

"Damn it what are the people of Kyoto thinking? I can't believe they are defending the rogue samurai." Shimpachi hissed as he threw his rag into the tub of water with a bit more force than needed.

"We lack any real track record in this area. But the nationalists, especially the Choshu ronin grease people's palms." Sannan said, speaking for the first time about the matter. What he said made sense; if the Roshigumi had no track record with the people of Kyoto then hoping that they would trust them would be a big stretch. Not only that but if rogue samurai were bribing civilians to not do anything then it only made the matter worse for them.

"Hajime, having crossed blades with them what do you think?" Hijikata asked, referring to the rogue samurai Hajime and Shimpachi had fought earlier that day.

Hajime, who had been quietly cleaning off his cloths the whole time, stood up and looked at Hijikata. "I found most of the men lacking in the skill of the sword, but there are many of them and our numbers are quite small. I would be worried to think what would happen if they were to surround us." Hajime said in a serious tone.

This made Sakura a little nervous, Hajime was an excellent swordsman, one of the best she had ever seen but yet the number of the rogue samurai alarmed him. There must have been quite a few of them to get this sort of answer from Hajime.

"That being said, it would take too much time and money to enlist new recruits and train them. Getting yourselves killed won't do us any good, for now never go out alone." Hijikata said looking everyone in the eye to make sure they all understood him. Sannan nodded agreeing completely with Hijikata on the matter.

"At any rate, there just isn't enough stuff we can do around here for right now. What ever happened to us working for the Izu domain?" Shinpatchi asked peaking everyones attention.

A while ago Sakura had found out that Serizawa was working toward having the Izu domain fund the Roshigumi and back them so that they could get their name out to the public. But it had been a while since anyone had heard anything about the situation, and if they did not get support soon they might not be able to stay in Kyoto. Sakura was mostly worried about this, if the Roshigumi had to leave Kyoto and go back to Eddo, where everyone was from, Sakura didn't know what would happen to her. She tired not to think about those possibilities if she didn't have to.

"In a short while we will be sending a petition to the lord of Izu requesting his permission to stay in Kyoto." Sannan said, answering Shinpatchi's question, but just raising more questions in Sakura's head.

"Any chance that they will give us permission to stay?" Shinpatchi asked, voicing the first question that had risen to the only females

mind, she knew there was nothing she could do about it and that she shouldn't worry about it because of that fact, but she just couldn't help the lump in her throat that always appeared when this topic came up.

"I can't say, depending on their answer there is a high possibility that we will have to leave Kyoto." Sannan said letting out a long sigh, everyone was stressed over this topic, it truly decided the Roshigumi's entire future. "Our fate truly rests on Serizawa's connections and course of action." Sannan said finishing his thoughts on the matter.

Sakura stiffened a bit after hearing that man's name, she had been lucky enough to not run into him again after the day he had attacked her and she had no desire to ever have to see him again. She truly felt sorry for Ryonoske, having to serve Serizawa all of the time had to be a nightmare. Sakura turned toward Hijikata when she heard him let out an angry huff.

"Just tell yourself that we are using him." Sannan said trying to comfort his friend, indicating to Serizawa. Sakura had soon after meeting him found out that most of the men she had become closely acquainted to hated Serizawa. It made her feel a bit better knowing that he was not a man that others thought highly of.

"I cannot make myself that emotionally detached from this. You can say what you want about me, but I swear one day I will outwit that man and elevate Kondo to a high seat of power." Hijikata growled out, a heated glare present on his face.

Sakura had to admit that Hijikata's glare was quite effective; it never ceased to send shivers down her back when she saw it. But she had to agree wholeheartedly with Hijikata, she too wanted to see Kondo rise to a higher power than that deplorable man and she would do whatever she could to make that happen.

\* \* \*

><p>Sakura sat patiently outside the meeting hall of the Roshigumi, currently there was a meeting going on that required all of the troops to be present. Unfortunately for Sakura all of the troops meant Serizawa, who had made it perfectly clear that he did not want her in his presence. While Sakura had recently become antiquated with many of the troops, who knew she was a woman, Serizawa had strictly prohibited her from actually sitting in on meetings.</p>

The fur on her tail stood on end remembering what he had said when she started to walk into the meeting hall. '\_Beasts should be kept outside and leashed to make sure they are well behaved.\_' His words infuriated her to no end, if anyone was a beast it was him! But while many of the men knew about her and that she had somehow become a part of their ranks, that did not mean that they accepted the fact that a woman was amongst their ranks.

"We have just received a letter from the lord of Izu, the Kyoto military commissioner. He is officially going to place us under his charge!" Kondo's voice seeped through the thin walls of the meeting hall, catching in Sakura's sensitive ears. She could hear the happy voices of the men in the room chatting about this new information. Sakura was surprised and happy herself, she had to stop her tail from

wagging and loosening her already lose pants. It had been a few days since Hajime and Shinpatchi had come home with blood covering them, so to hear this news so soon seemed so serial.

"Its amazing how Serizawa was able to persuade to the shogunate." She could hear one of the men's voice's over the other men that were still talking and it turned her whole mood a bit sour. She covered her mouth to muffle the sound of her actually growling at the thought that anyone would praise that man. She could hear said man trying to brush off the compliment with arrogance while the complementary voice continued to praise him.

She had only met him that one time but it had only taken that one time for Sakura to truly despise the man that was currently being praised. Sakura had never been one to dispise anyone even those who had been cruel to her in the past, but there was something about Sherwazoua that made her blood boil.

She was so caught up in her thoughts that she missed a large chunk of the conversation that was going on inside until she heard Serizawa's voice, "Why don't we celebrate with drinks in Shimabara." The older man's voice boomed over the rest. "Shinpatchi, why don't you join us?" Serizawa asked, making Sakura's skin crawl.

She didn't know why but she had the sinking feeling that Serizawa was trying to win over a number of the men. She didn't know if it was just her dislike for the man or if he was being suspicious but it seemed like he was up to something and she didn't like it.

"Ah you don't want a good for nothing like me tagging along with you; I might ruin your name by getting too drunk." Shinpatchi said in a sheepish voice. This made Sakura giggle, she knew Shinpatchi didn't like Serizawa very much and she could tell he was trying to get out of going with the man.

"Think nothing of it, a name is not so fragile that you can damage it by acting somewhat rowdy." Sherwazoua said in a smug voice, making Sakura want to punch him, she hated the way he always sounded too high and mighty like he was better than everyone around him and people should be lucky to be in his presence.

"In that case then... Heiskie and Sano are coming, right guys! The more the merrier after all!" Shinpatchi said, although she couldn't see him Sakura could tell he was pulling at strings to try and not spend an evening alone with Sherwazoua. "Souji, Hajime you guys are coming too right?!"

Sakura frowned at this, if everyone was going out to drink then she was going to be left at the house alone again. She hated being alone in the house it made her think about Akio and how much she still missed him. It also made her feel like an outsider still even though the others had assured her she wasn't. Sakura looked down, not paying attention to the rest of the conversation, instead trying to figure out how she was going to spend the night alone.

Without realizing it the door that lead to the hall way opened, surprising Sakura, as the men started to file out of the room. She quickly stood up so she could get out of everyone's way, Serizawa stopped right next to her.

"I would ask you to come to shimabara with us but they don't let beasts into the houses." Serizawa hissed toward Sakura before smirking at her and walking away.

Sakura's fingers curled into fists as she shook with anger, she couldn't stand him, he was so cruel. Taking every chance he got to bring her down, spit on her and then some. She stopped glaring at the man when she felt a gentle hand on her shoulder.

"Sorry Sakura." Heiskie said a sympathetic look on his face when Sakura turned around to face him.

"We will bring you back some Sake okay?" Sano said as he walked past her. Sakura looked away but nodded, she knew none of them wanted to go with Serizawa but it didn't make her feel any less alone when they weren't there.

"Don't feel too bad Sakura, I'm being forced to go." She heard a familiar voice say, she looked up to see a reluctant Ryonoske standing in front of her. Sakura giggled knowing that Ryonoske wasn't Serizawa's biggest fan either and most likely didn't want to go at all.

"We'll have a drink for me either way." Sakura said giving the young boy a smile.

\* \* \*

><p>Crickets chirped in the crisp night air, it was getting late and none of the men had returned from their celebration. Sakura has spent her time cleaning and sharpening her sword, brushing her tail and reading over a few scrolls she had borrowed from Kondo. But after a while she found herself with nothing to do and nowhere near tired enough to call it a night and go to sleep.</p>

So now she was walking around the compound, enjoying the night air, it was cold and crisp but felt nice as the breeze blew her long pink hair. She had kept her ears tied down with her ribbon knowing that outside the inner compound where the other captains lived she might be seen.

She stopped her walk when she happened upon a small garden amongst the compound. There was a lot of beautifully arranged shrubbery as well as a few trees, most of them were bonze but she could tell that one was a cherry blossom tree. She hopped that once spring came around it would bloom with beautiful flowers. She walked into the garden appreciating the landscaping that held a simple beauty about it. She noticed that a decently sized koi pound was surrounded by small smooth stones.

Sakura slowly slipped off her shoes and walked toward the pound, it was clear and not too deep, but she could see beautiful orange fish swimming amongst its depths. Taking a deep breath she focused chakra into the souls of her feet before carefully placing one foot on top of the water. After a moment she brought her other foot up to rest on top of the water as well.

Slowly she gracefully walked to the middle of the pound; she could feel the water shifting under her feet, licking them with their icy wetness. She stood in the middle of the pound making sure to focus

the right amount of chakra into her feet to keep her above the water, looking up at the night sky she silently gazed at the stars.

When she was alone she often did this, it seemed to help her relax, it always soothed her to feel the water beneath her, making her feel like she was floating. But it also made her remember her mother, and the song she would sing to her at night.

\_Wild...\_

\_Flower blossoming...\_

She felt herself start to sing the words that were engraved in her mind

\_I beg of you...\_

\_tell me this... so I know too...\_

\_Why do people fight...\_

\_They all act... as if its right\_

\_Don't they know...\_

\_That is no way to live...\_

Sakura held her hands close to her heart; she could almost hear her mother's voice singing the song as the words left her lips.

\_Valiant...\_

\_Flower blossoming...\_

\_What can you see?\_

\_When you... look down at me...\_

\_Why can't people say...\_

\_They're all sorry for the way... they've fought\_

\_I thought... we once could...\_

\_When the sky has cleared and rains have passed\_

\_I still won't forget the past\_

\_You are not alone on your own...\_

"Sakura?"

The voice that spoke startled the young woman, making her gasp and almost lose control on her chakra. She felt one foot slightly sink into the water a bit before she pulled it back up. Sakura quickly turned around to see who had caught her only to find Hijikata and Kondo staring back at her.

Sakura sighed in relief knowing that while the men knew she had

strange healing powers if they found out she was capable of more than she might be in trouble. Slowly she walked back to the edge of the pound toward the two men. She slipped her shoes back on as Hijikata and Kondo approached her.

"Were you just walking on water?" Kondo said his jaw slightly slack still not believing what he saw, while Hijikata seemed to be clam but had a questioning look on his face. Sakura sighed knowing that the two would of course have questions for her; she walked toward the porch and sat down knowing that this might be a long conversation.

"Yes..." She answered softly, she didn't exactly know how either of them were going to take it but she hopped neither of them would be mad that she hadn't told them before.

"How?" Hijikata said talking for the first time since she saw the two appear.

Sakura fidgeted in place for a moment before looking at the ground, "By focusing chakra into my feet." she answered simply, but knew this would bring about more questions.

"I thought your chakra was for healing." Kondo said, giving the young girl a confused look, he didn't look angry just curious.

"That's only part of what I can do with my chakra." Sakura said simply but when she looked at the two she knew she would have to elaborate. "Like I've said before, unlike most people I have the ability to access the chakra within my body, I can use this chakra to heal as well as increase my strength and stabilize what would be unstable surfaces for me to walk on, like you just saw now." She said taking a deep breath after finishing her explanation. She knew that she wouldn't be able to keep this part of her abilities from them for long and honestly she hadn't planned to, she just hadn't been given the right time to tell them or the right circumstance to use her other powers.

Everyone was quite for a moment before Hijikata spoke, "Why didn't you tell us about this before." His voice was not reprimanding like she thought it would be but simply questioning.

"At first I didn't want you guys to see me as more of a demon then necessary, but after I just never found the right time to bring it up" she explained telling the truth behind her secrecy.

There was another long silence which was starting to make Sakura nervous, out of all the men Hijikata was one that she talked to the least.

"How extensive is your power?" Hijikata asked again only sounding curious.

"What you've seen mostly, I can increase my strength but not by much, a little more than the average man's strength, other than my healing I had to teach myself these abilities after my mother died. I knew they were possible by seeing her do them but it took me many years to figure it out and then hone those skills." She said giving them the full explanation.

It was the complete truth, her mother had taught her the basics of healing, but she had only ever seen her mother walk on water or use her chakra to increase her strength. So once her mother had died she tried to teach herself those skills to help her survive on her own. It wasn't till she was 18 that she finally figured out most of the skills her mother had demonstrated and after that she had begun to hone those skills.

Hijikata and Kondo nodded in understanding making Sakura let out a breath of air she didn't know she had been holding. Although she acted more like herself around the men she still felt like she was on thin ice with them, like she was still on trial on whether they would keep her around or not.

She relished in the silence the two men gave her before Kondo spoke again. "That song you were singing... was quite beautiful." His words surprised Sakura, the conversation had gone from serious to light hearted or at least for the two men.

Sakura blushed and gave the older man a small smile; she hadn't had many people hear her sing before so being complemented on it was also a rarity. "Thank you..." She said looking up at the two, "My mother used to sing it to me when I was younger, and often when I'm on the water like that... it makes me think of her." She said a far off look on her face as she tried to remember her mother's face.

"You must miss her." Kondo said giving the girl a sad smile, knowing what it was like to lose a parent.

"Every day..." Sakura said looking down at the ground. She truly missed her mother for many reasons, she made her feel normal, like the way she looked was normal, she also made her feel loved and cared for. There wasn't a day that went by that she didn't wish she could talk to her mother once more, even to just talk about the weather, anything would do.

Sakura was so caught up in her thoughts that she didn't even hear Heiskue running toward them until he was standing in front of them. "Hijikata, Kondo, you have to come quick something happened at the red light district!" Heiskue yelled effectively grabbing everyones attention.

Kondo and Hijikata both looked at each other with a worried glance before standing up to follow Heiskue. Sakura stood up as well and began to follow the three out of the compound. "Sakura there is no reason for you to come as well." Hijikata said looking down at the young woman as she tried to keep up with the three men.

"If someone is injured I should be there to help them." She replied still following the men at a quick pace.

"You know how Serizawa is..." Kondo started to say but cut himself off, Serizawa made it abundantly clear how he felt about Sakura and everyone knew it, not everyone knew why exactly but it was none the less clear.

"I know." Sakura said leaving her answer short, she didn't want to live her life around Serizawa and what he thought, and she didn't want him to dictate her either.

It didn't take long before they reached the red light district and the establishment that held the other members of the Roshigumi. When they reached the room Heisuke lead them to they were surprised at the sight, sake bottles and food were knocked over onto the floor and the room looked in disarray. Sakura noticed Souji sitting on the other side of the room, sitting quietly, which bothered her a bit since the man never seemed to be still or silent.

"Serizawa, just what happened here." Hijikata said after taking in how the room looked.

"Don't penalize me with that damn beast in here, we can talk once you throw out the trash." Seriwazwa hissed, glaring at Sakura, and Sakura glared right back but she knew she looked far less intimidating.

Sakura stared at the man for a few more moments before she let out a sigh of frustration. "Fine." She hissed before leaving the room. She looked back to see Hijikata glaring daggers at Serizawa and Kondo and Heiskue giving her apologetic looks. She let out another sigh as she shut the door behind her, she could clearly hear Hijikata's angry voice booming behind the closed door which made her smirk.

"Sakura?"

Her name being called made Sakura look up to see Sano and Ryonoske staring at her. "What are you doing here?" Sano asked as he walked up to the woman he spent many patrols with.

"When Heiskue came to get Hijikata and Kondo I wanted to come with in case someone was hurt." Sakura said stating the obvious as to why she was there, "What happened anyway?" She questioned, tilting her head to the side a bit to emphasized her wonder.

"A Miko talked back to Serizawa, so he started throwing a fit, and almost attacked the poor girl," Sano started to say, explaining the situation at hand, "That is until Ryonoske stepped in to save her." Sano said grinning as he pointed his finger at a slightly injured Ryonoske.

Sakura smiled at the boy in front of her, he had done the same thing for her when Serizawa had attacked her. She walked up the Ryonoske making sure no one was watching or walking by before lifting a glowing hand to the boys injured face. "That sounds pretty brave I would say." Sakura smiled as Ryonoske tried to push her hand away but she pushed past his defense and started to heal his injured cheek.

"Yeah it was pretty cool till he blew it a few minutes ago by saying the wrong thing to that miko." Sano said smirking at the young boy, who was about to retaliate since Sakura had finished healing him, when the pink haired girl playfully smacked Sano across the arm.

"What was that for, what did I do?!" Sano asked wondering how he somehow got into trouble from this conversation.

"Not just you, Heiskue, Shimpatchi, Souji, Okita or Hajimi should have stepped in before it got that bad." Sakura said making Ryonoske

laugh, Sakura and Sano always seemed to butt heads but it was always in a friendly way.

"We did step in, if we hadn't things would have been a lot worse." Sano said but stopped defending himself when he noticed the look on Sakura's face. It was a mix between anger and frustration.

Sano knew that Sakura knew he and the others had stepped in before he had even said anything. She knew they would always stand up for those who could not stand up for themselves but she was still angry with the fact that this entire situation even happened. Serizawa was a tyrant no matter where he was or who he was with and she was tired of not being able to do anything about him.

"Don't worry." Sano started to say, placing his hand on her head for reassurance, "I'm sure Hijikata will give him a good talking to." Sano continued to say trying to reassure the young woman, he knew how frustrated Sakura got over Serizawa.

"I mearly chastised her for her rude behavior." Serizawa's arragent voice. Filtered through the thin rice paper screen door There was not a sherd of guilt in his voice for what he had done moments ago and it made Sakura's blood boil.

"It wouldn't have gottent his carried away if that had been all you had done!" Hijikata yelled, the angry prevalent in his voice, it was obvious that his thoughts were running along the same lines as Sakura's.

"Serizawa-sama I suggest we leave this to Kondo and move on." The voice of Serizawa's right hand man could be heard slithering throught the thin door.

Without any more words to be exchanged Seriwazwa stood before heading toward the door. Sakura glared at the man with multing emerald eyes as he opened the door and walked toward the three.

She had never felt such distest for anyone in her life, not for the people that called her a monster, or tried to kill her but this man made her blood boil to the point that it almost scared her. She didn't like this feeling, her mother had taught her that hate was an emotion that people claimed to have when they simply did not want to try and understand another person. She had taught her to try and understand people and think about where they were coming from, because it was almost never that anyone committed any action from of place of pure evil. So she knew that circumstances made people do things, the people who had done cruel things to her in the past did it from a place of fear but she couldn't seem to figure out what Seriwazwa's circumstances were.

As Seriwazwa came closer he still did not spare anyone of the three a glance but the moment he passed in front of Sakura she could hear one word slip quitly from his lips, "Beast."

And it was at that moment that the word had left his lips that she felt something dangrous inside her, it felt like a mixter of angry, and disgust, but it was on such a high level that she had never felt before, so intense that it made her chest burn. She knew exactly what the feeling was the moment it manifested, her mother had told her that hate was feeling the need to harm someone simply to harm them.

She had to take a step back because the feeling was so intense and it was in that moment that she knew she would have to figure out the man that she despised so much or she might turn into someone that scared her to no end.

\*\*What did you guys think?\*\*

\*\*The whole singing thing was a spur of the moment thing to reveal some more of Sakura's power but I kind of like it (The song is Euterpe from guilty crown if anyone wants to know! AmaLee does an amazing english cover of the song if anyone wants to check it out).  
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\*\*Let me know what you thought of the chapter, same as always review and I shall update!\*\*

\*\*Until next time!\*\*

\*\*MidnightShadow0110\*\*

End  
file.